MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

Kavisurya Baladeva Rath

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The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Śuddhodana the dream of Queen Māyā, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

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Rabindra Bhavan, 35, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi 110 001
Rabindra Sarobar Stadium, Block V-B, Calcutta 700 029
29, Eldams Road, Teynampet, Madras 600 018
172, Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400 014

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Preface

This monograph is a modest attempt to introduce one of the makers of Indian Literature, Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, an important poet administrator of 19th century Orissa, to non-Oriya readers. In fact, it is neither a complete biography of the poet, nor a critical estimate in detail. He has been presented to the readers keeping his literary background in view, which I hope, will reveal the man and the poet in true colour. His place in the fields of Oriya language, literature and music has been appreciated, and in order to acquaint the non-Oriya readers with the powers of wit and emotion in his poems, some of his lyrics have been given in translation, though such translations it may be pointed out, can never reveal the subtle creative imagination as well as the fine musicality of the language of the great poet.

I am grateful to Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi for this assignment. I am also grateful to my poet-friend Sri Sanat DasPatnaik, who has translated the lyrics into English. Finally, I am grateful to Prof. J.M. Mohanty, of Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, who has spared his time to go through the text thoroughly and make corrections wherever necessary.

Cuttack **Dasarathi Das**

CHAPTER 1

The Poet-Administrator

Kavisurya Baladeva Rath is considered one of the major poets of Orissa. He is remembered in the tradition of poetry created by Oriya poets like Dinakrushna, Upendra Bhanja and Avimanyu. In the history of Oriya poetry, the new style followed by Baladeva, has influenced the poets of subsequent generations. The poet Radhanath Ray in the later part of the 19th century correctly described him as the fortunate son of Goddess Saraswati.

> Fortunate are the twins of Goddess Saraswati
> Baladeva the poet, and Bhanja, the great.
>
> (*Chilika*)

Kavisurya Baladeva has not written much about his own life, neither is there much authentic biographical notes available on him. Even some of his works do not carry the legal stamp of his name. Therefore it is really difficult to write much about his life. At most one can only link a number of scattered, circulating episodes, more or less accepted to be true all over the state, on this great poet. Many playwrights have earned fame by dramatising these episodes while opening new grounds to know the poet. But as in these plays there is greater emphasis on imagination than on reality, and as these plays do not carry much historical truth in them, probably it would be better to discriminate between creative imagination and actual reality. Even now as new scholars are engaged in discovering more authentic details about the poet and his life, in the process newer anecdotes are being created. Avoiding such vague imaginative stories, a short sketch of the life of Baladeva can be prepared basing upon the views of eminent research scholars.

Kavisurya Baladeva Rath was born approximately in 1779,

at Vijayanagargarha, the capital of Khemundi State, now in Ganjam district in southern Orissa. Vijayanagargarha was only about 10 km away from the present Digapahandi, which is about 30 km away towards interior from Berhampur. It was a prosperous town ruled by the most powerful king of the State, Sri Purusottam Anangabhimadev (1728-1776) belonging to the Ganga dynasty. The King himself was a poet who patronised scholars, poets and creative talents of his time. One of his poetic works was *Krushnakeli Tarangini*. Brajasundar Pattnaik was his court poet. In *Rasa Kalpalata*, Brajasundar has portrayed the character of the king vividly and has also described the royal court. The King was a wise, knowledgeable person and gave due recognition to pundits, scholars and poets. Ujjal Ratha was another pundit. He received the title of 'Kaviraj Bramha' from the king. He wrote the *Sajjanananda Champu* and *Rama Champu*. His son was Kavisurya Baladeva. But by the time the king had died, and Ganjam had come under the rule of the East India Company. Earlier the Company had declared the king of Khemundi to be the 'most troublesome Zamindar in the district, and after the death of the king it added fuel to the fire by provoking domestic disputes in the royal family. Even when the king was alive it had attempted to crown his eldest son Sri Padmanava Dev as king. The plot had failed and as a result Padmanava raised a civil war in 1972 and took over the rule of the state from his father forcibly. The Company cleverly compelled Padmanava to sign a bond declaring that after the death of his father, Khemundi would be divided into Pratapgiri-garha (Sana Khemundi) and Vijayanagargarha (Bada Khemundi) and Padmanava would rule over Pratapgiri while his younger brother Jagannath Dev would rule Vijayanagargarha. It was deliberately done as the Company wanted to weaken the powerful Khemundi rulers. Padmanava was neither a lover of art nor of culture. A man of cruel temperament he continuously tried to overrun and take possession of the state of his younger brother. In the process he became a pauper, spending huge money in the wars. The Company exploited Padmanava. At last he forcibly dethroned his brother, Jagannath Dev, who also on his turn wanted to take revenge by acquiring Pratapgirigarha. The two brothers continued to fight against each other for twenty-five years.

The war destroyed the glamour and glory of the royal court of Vijayanagargarha. Ujjal Ratha is believed to have turned out of the court and he now earned his living by teaching. It was a hard time. From a luxurious, prosperous living the family fell into utter poverty and misery. Whatever little money Ujjal earned was not enough to maintain his whole family. Baladeva was born during these hard days of his father. He lost his mother in his childhood. He was taken to Athagarha, in the same Ganjam district, to his maternal grandfather's house, where, in fact, he grew up.

Tripurari Otta, his grandfather, was an eminent pundit and tantric of his time. He looked after Baladeva, and made elaborate arrangements for his education. After completing his studies, the young Baladeva returned to his father and got married. But he lost his father immediately after his marriage and the meagre income of the family from the Chattuspathi (open air school) of his father, was gone. The poverty-stricken family again fell into great hardship. Even the close relatives tried to keep away from the family. Baladeva's native place Vijayanagargarha almost grew grey in his eyes and he started trying eagerly to get a job elsewhere.

In the mean time, Sri Rama Chandra Chottray, the new king of Jalantara, a neighbouring state, was trying to invite godmen, pundits, and men of learning and intelligence from outside the State to Jalantara with the sole purpose of boosting his own image as a patron of art and culture. Baladeva availed this opportunity, and was accepted by the king. Now he made out a fair living for himself and his family. The time was around 1797-98. Under the sympathetic king the atmosphere in the royal court was congenial. For the first time Baladeva's poetic talents got an opportunity to grow and blossom.

Baladeva had incredible poetic energy. As a result, in no time he emerged as the greatest among the poets in the King's court at Jalantara. The king honoured him by offering him the title of 'Kavisurya', that is, the sun among the poets. Besides being a poet Baladeva was also a keen lover of music, and composed his own songs. His lyrical stanzas, four-lined verses and 'chautisas' attract musicians and songsters even today. Besides he had a good voice too and could sing his own songs, which he did with great felicity in the king's court. Those were fine days

for Baladeva a youngman in his twenties. Not only his immense creative abilities were readily recognised and applauded, but also as time passed, he came to be respected more and more as an able administrator. In the mean time the king had appointed him as the Dewan or the chief administrator, of the State.

Baladeva proved himself as an able administrator in the general administration of the state. The poet and the administrator in him existed side by side throughout his life. Later in his life, he was not only honoured as a great poet by many kings but also enjoyed the privilege to work as Dewan in many places. The East India Company also duly approved his administrative abilities and appointed him as the manager and royal guardian of Mahuri and Paralakhemundi states respectively. There were affectionate and patronising kings, who donated land to this great poet so that free of financial worries the poet could engage himself unperturbed in writing. Baladeva had also a good income through his official status. All these contributed to the poet's peace of mind and boosted his creative imagination and achievement. His reputation spread all over Orissa. He became the darling poet of the people, adored, appreciated and honoured with titles everywhere. In the life of only a few Oriya poets, such prosperity and glory have been achieved. It was as though both Goddess Laxmi and Saraswati had blessed him.

Baladeva was also a great patriot. As an administrator he wanted to uplift the condition of the people of Orissa. It is believed that under his administration, for about ten to twelve years, the people of Jalantara enjoyed 'Ramarajya', a golden era. Hunter in his *History of Oriya literature* identified him as 'Jalantara Kavisurya Raiguru'.

In 1810, the young prince of Athagarha, Sri Balunkeswar Harichandan, was crowned as the king. He was an educated and cultured person. He wanted to appoint Baladeva as his poet-administrator. Just then, Rama Chandra of Jalantara had died. So Baladev left Jalantara and came over to Athagarha. He was received by the king and the people with great pomp and ceremony. He was appointed both as the court poet and Dewan. His period of stay at Athagarha saw the crowning achievement of his poetic genius. Here he composed his famous *Chaupadi Chautisa* and *Kishore Chandrananda Champu* and a lot of other

varieties of Choupadis and Chautisas. He also wrote his prose piece *Hasya Kallol*. The benevolent king offered him the 'Rai-guru' title. It was quite meaningful, because such titles were offered only to those who excelled in all Shastras. This recognition, it is said, brought him to the notice of the King of Puri, Sri Mukunda Dev, who sent the royal certificate of merit and recognition to Baladev.

The episodes concerning the offer of Sri Mukunda Dev is still a puzzle as many of its details are not clear. Anyway it was a great honour. In fact, the royal family of Khurdha (Puri) had for generations friendly relationship with the royal family of Athagarha. The king of Khurdha was actually known as the 'Thakura Raja', the Lord King of Puri. It is said, when the Muslims invaded Orissa in the eighteenth century, even Lord Jagannath had to be taken away from Puri from His temple, for fear of desecration and the Lord had to live the life of an exile under the protection of Raja Govinda Harichandan of Athagarha in the village Patharagram of Athagarha. Bira Kishore Dev (1736-1780), the king of Khurdha, had spent his adolescent princely-life at Athagarha, and even Mukunda Dev, the King, fearing the British Army, took refuge at Athagarha. Therefore, it was known as 'Sarana dharani' (the land that gives shelter) as it gave shelter to the kings of Khurdha as well as to Lord Jagannath. When the 'Maha Deepa' (the Great Lamp) goes up the dome of the temple of Lord Jagannath, priests and people wish the best of the kings of Athagarha and Puri. This shows how intimate were these two royal families. Perhaps for that it was obvious on the part of Mukunda Dev to honour Baladeva, who was the soul of Athagarha.

But Mukunda Dev on his own, during his exiled days at Athagarha, must have been impressed by the poetic genius and administrative abilities of Baladeva, as a result of which he honoured Baladeva in his own court at Puri, as 'Kavisurya Rai-guru Mohapatra'. A close look at the title would reveal the truth about Baladeva's qualities—for his poetic skill he was 'Kavi-surya', for his scholarly attitudes he was 'Raiguru', and as an efficient administrator he was 'Mohapatra'. In the twenty-third Anka (year) of his reign, Mukunda Dev, in a 'Sananda' (royal parchment) described Baladeva as *Kavisurya Raiguru Mohapatra, Sunabenta Chamar* (One who is fortunate to fan Lord Jagannath

with the golden fan), *Joda Mashala* (the double torch-bearer), *Ghoshara Pubachha* (attendant of the Lord), *Jauntiakabat* (in charge of the store), *Magara muhan Palinki Chadar* (one who covers the palanquin of the Lord looking like the face of a crocodile, with a blanket), *Adeni* (a type of fan carried behind the Lord), *Trasa* (an umbrella on the head of the Lord), *Pruthaka Namaskar* (he who enjoys the privilege to salute the Lord alone), and *Baithakaghara* (one, who is allowed to sit with the Lord in his Guest Hall). Such honour vis-a-vis the Lord and the Lord King of Puri, had rarely been given to any other poet before. But Baladeva was not interested to use his Mohapatra title or other titles. On the other hand he felt happy as Kavisurya Raiguru. To express his gratefulness to King Mukunda Dev, he dedicated a few four-lined verses (chaupadi) in the king's name.

Kavisurya, perhaps, lived at Athagarha from 1810 to 1820. Owing to his administrative efficiency, the East India Company was pleased with him. Mahuri state in Ganjam district came under the court of wards in 1821. The Collector of Ganjam was Peter Reader Cazalet. He appointed Kavisurya as the manager of Mahuri. There were domestic disputes in the royal family. Earlier in 1782, King Harihara Dev of Mahuri was killed by Majhian Deo, who was assisted by the Company. The king had no son and the Company brought Mahuri under its control by appointing Majhian Deo as the caretaker. Since that day the widow-queen Krushnapriya Devi and Majhian Deo Gopinath Dev were at war with each other. Berhampur, the capital town was wealth town and the Company wanted to occupy it. A plan was made out cleverly. The Company issued a notice in 1807 that since Mahuri state had not paid the tax, the Company would take over the state administration. Mahuri was forced to surrender. Krushnapriya, completely baffled by this move signed a bond with Majhian Deo that after her death, Majhian Deo would rule the state. In 1809, the court decided the case and Krushnapriya got back her state. The next year, the Company again asked for the tax and sold out the state to Sarap Bandam. This resulted in a rebellion among the local Paikas. The Company faced a real challenge and had to surrender. Mahuri was brought back from Bandam by the Company, but the Company again played a trick. It demanded that Mahuri

should be ruled by the legal royal heir. The widow-queen protested. But the Company did not listen to her cry. It crowned the bastard son of Majhian Deo, Sri Krushna Chandra Dev, as the king, and "pending the majority of the young Zamindar", the estate was managed by Mr. Cazalet "under the court of wards on the 17th July 1821". (*Ganjam District Manual*, 142).

Kavisurya was appointed as the manager of this young king. When the King grew up and was able to rule his state, Baladeva left. Perhaps he was at Mahuri from 1821 to 1830, because in 1831, the Company shifted its headquarters from Berhampur to Chatrapur, as Mahuri became free from the court of wards. It seems the Company was very much pleased with Kavisurya's administration during these years. Because immediately afterwards he was appointed in another important post at Parlakhemundi. At that time the King of Parlakhemundi was Jagannath Gajapati Narayan Dev. In 1805, when he was only one year old, his father, king Purusottam Narayan Dev died. The state came under the rule of the court of wards. Due to the Paika Revolt, the Company, in 1821, accepted Jagannath Dev as the new king. There was a domestic quarrel going on in between his mother Pata Mahadei and his paternal grandfather Gajapati Dev's wife, Rani Saugi, for about seven years. The dispute was somewhat patched up. But to keep the young king under their control, these two women made Jagannath a drunkard and he was lost in wine and women, and remained king only by name. The state was actually ruled by the Company, and the Dewan became all in all. This domestic quarrel had jeopardised the state administration, as a result of which the collection of excise tax was much reduced. Thus in 1830, the Company again brought back the rule of the state under the court of wards (*Ganjam District Manual*, p. 144) and for the inefficient king, a Guardian was appointed. Thus Kavisurya came in. His duty was to advise and administer the state by consulting the king, whenever he was in normal psychic state. Though earlier Kavisurya had proved himself as an able administrator here he failed. He could not reform the corrupt, characterless king. The condition of the state deteriorated. The Company was unhappy. Domestic rebellions spread and at last the Company had to call its battalions to suppress the rebellion.

The first member of the Revenue Board of Madras, George

Russell, enjoying extra-constitutional power, came to Parlakhemundi as the special Commissioner, in 1832, to meet the challenge. He first collected information to analyse the causes of the rebellion. He camped at Parala. Perhaps Kavisurya did not help him much. It was his duty to inform Russell about facts, as he was the royal guardian and adviser. Neither he told against the rebellion nor in favour of it. Russell was very angry. Kavisurya did not care much about it. Probably he never wanted the English Company to interfere in the domestic matters of Orissa. In 1834, Russell suppressed the rebellion and ordered that Kavisurya should be asked to vacate his post. In his report he mentioned that, "Kaweesooria Roygooroova',—in respect to the future administration of the Zemedari (Parlakemedy) I am decidedly of the opinion that it should be kept, as at present, under the immediate management of the Collector and principal Native Officer, employed under him, as well as the guardian, should be a man totally unconnected with Khemundy and its politics. From the individual who had lately filled the later situation, I never received the slightest information and there is every reason to believe that he was far from being true either to his Rajah or to us. Before leaving northward I considered it my duty to recommend that he should be removed an his place should be supplied by some person in whom the collector could rely. (paragraph 124—reports of the Disturbances in Parlakemedy, Vizagapatam and Goomsoor in 1832-1836. Vol. I—by Mr. G.E. Russell, Special Commissioner for Ganjam, published in 1956).

So, it seems that in 1834, Kavisurya's job as the Guardian of Parala was terminated, and as he lost the favour of the Company the possibility of getting any more such jobs anywhere else subsequently also ended. He was so much involved in the matters of administration, rebellion, politics, etc. that, he had perhaps, no time to write any major work, while he was at Mahuri and Parala. He wrote *Chaupadi Ratnakara* in his own name and a few minor verses and Chautisas.

After leaving Parala, Kavisurya settled down at Berhampur. He built his own house at Balajipentha. He lived happily and luxuriously. By this time he had come to acquire great respect as a poet from all around—from people, from kings as well as from the Company administration, and the financial support he

got from the kings as well as from his vast landed property was regular and substantial. Even the poet's intense sorrow for not having a son—his only son being dead already untimely—was removed by the birth of a son in about 1835, whom he named Biswanath after Lord Shiva. In 1845 he went to Athagarha at the invitation of his friend the king of Athagarha, where it seems he picked up small-pox infection. He came back to Berhampur immediately but after a week, in the month of Baisakha (April-May), on the auspicious day of Akhay Trutiya (The Immortal Third Day), he passed away.

Baladeva was a great poet, a fine scholar and had a keen ear for music. Besides he was an impartial, able administrator and had always shown a great deal of sympathy and understanding for the problems of the poor and downtrodden As was want in those days, he had to depend upon the patronage of the kings, but he was sharply conscious of his own prestige, and eked out a good and comfortable living on his own merit. He was also, in a way, a nationalist, and a man of courage, wit and wisdom. Therefore, during his life time, he enjoyed honour and glory, position and status, as well as adoration and respect. Kavisurya not only wrote in Oriya but also in Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi and Telugu. He touched different forms of Oriya poetry like Champu, Chautisa, Chaupadi, narrative poetry, etc. He also wrote a powerful prose piece entitled *Hasya Kallol* (Waves of Laughter). But he was primarily a poet of innumerable Chaupadis. In the history of medieval Oriya literature such combinations as he showed, combining subtle imagination with powerful vision, and experimenting with new ideas and words while standing firm on tradition, was almost a rare accomplishment.

CHAPTER 2

Literary Background

Kavisurya wrote his poems towards the end of the Riti-age and in his works the influence of Riti elements can be clearly noted. The word 'Riti' had a special connotation in Sanskrit which meant grand stanzaic patterns. The Riti-school believed that grand composition or diction (Riti) was the soul of poetry (*Ritiratma Kavyasya*) and an important age in Oriya literature came to be named as the Riti-age. However the word had a broader connotation with Oriya poets. They believed in the rules of classical Sanskrit poetics as 'Riti' and poetry written in such diction was accepted as 'Riti Kavya'. In the medieval Oriya literature Riti-books and Riti-verses grew almost side by side with similar developments in Hindi literature. But the growth of Riti-books in Oriya was weaker than the growth of Riti-verses and in fact Oriya Riti-kavya came to acquire a very rich existence. It brought a harmony among the paradoxical poetic conclusions of Sanskrit poetry and not only grew to be flawless and excellent but ornamental and complete in 'Rasa'. From the beginning of the seventeenth century to the second decade of the nineteenth century, writings in Riti-style continued in Oriya. Also in the sixteenth century along with Geetas and Samhitas, when the composition of Puranas and Bhajanas crowded Oriya poetry, in Arjun Das, Deva Durllava Das, Pratap Ray, etc. the Riti-sensibility could be seen flowing like a small stream. Its depth was thin and shallow. Later the Riti-trend overflowed in the writings of Sishu Sankar, Kartik Das, Bishnu Das, Dhananjay Bhanja, and Dinakrushna Das, who were influenced by the great Sanskrit poets like Bharavi, Magha, Sriharsa and Jayadeva. But it was waiting to achieve perfection in the poetry of Upendra Bhanja (1670-1740). His genius enlightened the course of Riti-poetry of Orissa and took it to its zenith.

Therefore when Kavisurya wrote his poetry towards the beginning of the 19th century, the Riti-style was already on the wane. He felt that the Riti-inspiration was no longer a living force and he tried to get over its cold bondage though, of course, he could not completely run away from the trend of his age, and accepted Riti-style as one of his guiding factors.

But the age during which the Riti-kavyas were written, was not a glorious one in the political life of Orissa. Orissa was an independent state in the eastern region of India till the 16th century without caring for the invasions of the Pathans and the Mughals. She had lost her independence by the time the Riti-poets had begun to form their school. Gradually the Pathans, the Mughals, the Marhattas, and the English continued to rule over Orissa one after the other. The Oriya religion, society and culture fell into ruins. There was no central administration. Orissa stood divided into small estates and Zamindaris. In course of time these so called 'feudal lords' under the patronage of the Pathans and the Mughals started to enjoy immense privileges and power within their geographical limits. However small might have been the estates, the feudal lords almost always declared themselves as 'Mahindra Bahadur'. It was fortunate that some of them had some love for Oriya language and literature. A few patronised the poets. The king of Jalantara, Raja Ramachandra Chhotray and the king of Athagarha, Balunkeswar Harichandan, were made immortal by their court poets. The royal family of Ghumsara brought great honour and glory to Oriya poetry. Raja Dhananjay Bhanja himself, and his grandson Upendra Bhanja created such illustrious literary tradition that it inspired many other kings towards patronising poetic power and fame. That is, some of them wrote lyrics, and others patronised poets. Thus Riti-kavya came to enjoy royal patronage, the poets got free from want and come to ease. Freedom from want encouraged poets to write volumes and to improve upon the classical world of music. But on the other hand, this spirit of patronage also proved harmful. The royal taste and concept of beauty dominated and the Riti-kavya got divorced from common life. There was neither the picture of poverty, nor the echo of the pangs of sorrow originating from slavery and loss of freedom. Besides, in Riti-literature, there came to be an absolute worship of physical beauty—descriptions of

physical beauty and games of physical love. Greater emphasis was put on artifact and the poets came to give more and more attention to external music and rhyming and the use of words for their own sake. All these in a way took them away from exploring possibilities in human life, society and the universe.

Another important influence on Oriya Riti-kavya was Sanskrit poetry. The Riti poets appreciated and read Magha, Sriharsa and Jayadeva more than Kalidasa. As a result they advertised their scholarly genius and neglected the poetic-creative genius and imagination in them. They made use of their imagination within the limits of 'Alankara shastra' and accepted the traditional themes and narrow channels of expression. Sriharsa was the high priest of Oriya Riti-kavya. Upendra Bhanja, the famous Riti poet, accepted him as his ideal.

Kavisurya Baladeva, from the beginning of his career, loved and honoured the style of 'Naisadha'. He believed in following the footprints of Sriharsa and other epic poets. The style of Kavisurya's *Chandrakala* is 'Naishadhika' that is, full of ornamental expressions, and scholarly. At the same time, like other Riti-poets, he was also influenced by Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*. The glory of *Gitagovinda* lies in turning away from the divine and spiritual world of the song of love between Radha and Krishna to the concept of beauty, aesthetics and art where the picture of love is delightfully presented. Its beautiful soft music (*Kanta-padavali*) and the mysterious sex-act (*Rati-Keli*) came to have their imprints in Riti-poems in their accounts of kisses, and wounds created by nail-bites in breasts due to excessive sex-desire. In many chaupadis of Kavisurya the print of *Gitagovinda* is clear and eloquent.

Although Kavisurya began his literary career in the footsteps of Sriharsa, Jayadeva and Upendra after a few years he outgrew them. He felt a new spirit and sensibility in him and felt an urge to create in his own way. It was freedom of spirit away from Riti-kavya, which opened a new horizon in Oriya literature, liberating it from the oppressing care of classical models. The greatness of Kavisurya's work lies in his devotion to tradition as well as in his capacity to recreate it in a new dimension without being restrained by it.

The poems of Kavisurya are a faithful blend of literature and music. His 'chhandas', 'chautisas', 'chaupadis', etc. apart from

being fine poetic pieces, have also fine musical structure. He composed most of his poems in such a way that they could be sung and to that extent he instructed 'raga,' 'tala', etc. for each of the poems. As a result they have not only been sung all over Orissa by noted singers, but many of them have become extremely popular as songs. This way he maintained the tradition of Upendra Bhanja, many of whose poems have been composed to music and sung as popular pieces frequently.

Kavisurya also continued the tradition of writing Chautisas, according to the order of the letters of alphabets. Taking the thirty-four Oriya consonants, from '*ka*' to '*kshya*'', one after another, and keeping the concerned consonant in the beginning, he composed five to six stanzas on each consonant organised into a poem. Following this technique, he created his *Ratnakar Champu*, *Premodaya Champu* and *Kishore Chandrananda Champu*, the most famous of all. The first two were called 'chaupadi-bhusana' and the last 'chaupadi-chautisa'. One is to remember that there were two definite trends in Riti-kavya. The main thematic trend originated from the Sanskrit epic works and in such works the ancient mythological facts and stories were made use of. Following the same trend Kavisurya had composed his *Chandrakala* kavya. It was incomplete. The second trend was to write free musical verses. The 'chhandas', 'chaupadis' and 'chautisas' were written in this line depicting mainly the game of love between Radha and Krishna. Kavisurya developed this trend intelligently as this was like a narrow stream that flowed parallel to the main river of the other trend. Soon he freed himself of mythological or religious motivations and started writing free 'chaupadis' and 'chautisas' because of which one can say, that in a way, he provided the foundation stone to the rise of modern Oriya lyric.

From one point of view Kavisurya conformed to the taste of his times, but at the same time he went beyond it. He incorporated a new sensibility into Oriya literature and experimented on new forms and tried to free Oriya poetry from the classical chains by his new techniques and archetypes. He set the fashion of a new poetry for others to follow.

CHAPTER 3

Baladeva's Works: An Outline

Kavisurya began to write poems from an early age. These included Kavyas and innumerable lyrics wherein he not only excelled but became well known for a particular form, that is, 'champu', which had its source in Sanskrit and used both prose and poetry in its structure. Besides, he composed a significant piece in prose, almost an early work in Oriya prose, entitled *Hashya Kallol* (Waves of Humour). He also composed poems in Sanskrit, Hindi and Telugu. On the whole his creative achievement was rich and substantial and established him as a major poet in Oriya literature. A brief survey of his works is given below.

Chandrakala

The usually accepted form in Riti-age was narrative kavya. Following the ideals of *Kiratarjuniya*, *Sishupalavaddha*, *Naishadha*, etc. in Sanskrit literature, Oriya Riti-poets wrote their kavyas. Upendra Bhanja almost brought a perfection to this art. His imaginative work *Lavanyavati* inspired Kavisurya to write his *Chandrakala* (Chandrakala), which largely followed the tradition of Riti-kavya. It is named after the heroine Chandrakala. It is the story of the rebirth of the hero and the heroine, and the poet begins with an invocation to the Muse. He has narrated the story of rebirth, birth, childhood, adolescence, and youth of the heroine as well as her dress and fashions, her walks in the garden and games in water. Then the hero and the heroine see each other in their dreams and fall in love with each other. Ananga Sundar, the hero, sees Chandrakala through the mysterious art of the conjurer. Then, there is an exchange of letters between the two lovers and finally the date and time of their

physical meeting is finalised and materialised. Following this division of his work, Kavisurya completed only eighteen 'chhandas' (chapters) and kept the poem incomplete. He failed to write about the physical union, marriage, honeymoon, game of sex, dialogues (of love), sorrow due to temporary separation between the lovers, and then reunion, etc., which are conventional descriptions in the usual patterns of Riti-kavyas. A number of stories are being told relating to the reasons why the poet kept the poem incomplete. It is difficult to certify the truth of any of these anecdotes. But most probably Kavisurya, whose real talent lay in composing lyrics like 'chautisa', 'chaupadi', etc., found this type of writing strenuous and uncongenial to his taste and hence left it incomplete. The influence of *Lavanyavati* is so much felt in this work, that even Kavisurya himself, realising that Chandrakala could never have replaced the glory of *Lavanyavati* and would have come out only as a 'Shadow-poem', left the work incomplete and started to write his own chaupadis

But one thing is evident, that *Chandrakala* is not the creation of a novice. Its language, descriptions, use of imagination, etc., are those of a master. Following Sriharsa and Upendra, he did not fail to show his scholarship. This kavya was almost the microcosm of his poetic universe. His power of alliteration as well as his capacity to create 'Adi Rasa' blossomed profusely. 'Adi Rasa' particularly inspired his aesthetics, witty creativity and ornamental style. In the linguistic field he made use of standard language and the language of the Yavanas. It can be said that *Chandrakala* provided an early field for his poetic exercises. After attaining sufficient confidence he left it incomplete.

Chaupadi

Chaupadi is the juicy fruit of Kavisurya's creation. Each poet looks for a medium to express himself. Kavisurya discovered chaupadis for his self-revelation and spontaneity of expression. He composed more than five hundred such poems and in all these poems there is a continuing uniformity in style. The repetition of common tunes can be heard in a majority of these poems. However, when an expert singer sings them, the listeners feel excited and delighted. The music is pure, subtle and sweet. The mystery of mundane love, its surprises and

pleasures, have been beautifully expressed through equally sweet sounds of musical words. The joys of union as well as the pangs of separation have been expressed as never before, in terms of real complications of life. In themes, as songs, as well as in matters of technique they have a lot of excellence and beauty.

A 'chaupadi' is a poem of four-lined stanzas. The first line is called 'ghosa' or 'dhruba'; the second line is called 'antara', the third is called 'sanchari' and the fourth is 'aabhoga'. But Kavisurya's 'chaupadis' do not adopt this form. They do not consist of four-lined stanzas. To translate in terms of music, one may call them as 'panchali' that is a song of more than four lines with or without 'ghosa'. Many of these chaupadis are 'Dhruba-Panchali'. It will be quite justified to call them as short lyrics or 'little songs'. In the book *Prataparudriya Yoshobhusana* it has been said that such lyrics should not have less than four lines or more than eight lines. In Orissa, such lyrics are known as 'chaupadis' and Kavisurya followed this form. Therefore even though the music created by Kavisurya is 'Panchali', the poems are accepted as 'chaupadis', following the traditional view in Oriya. The poet expresses his own deep feelings in five, six, seven or eight line structures and then in the dedication, that is, in the couplet at the end pours out his own mind through a statement. There are a lot of romantic fervour and youthful delight in Kavisurya's rhymes. His thoughtful ideas express as if the memory of 'divine' love, happiness and desire.

Kavisurya's 'chaupadis' are written in a free style, as lyrical as 'Muktaka Kavya'. Such kavya is an anthology of poems, which differ from each other in theme and form. Each poem is an independent unit to express a particular feeling within itself, without having any reference to other poems. Such a poem has separate stanzas in 'Muktaka'-style, complete in themselves, having one definite rhyme. They are unique in precision, while unifying dissociated thoughts. They have two things in equal proportion—the composition of the lyric and the way it is sung by a singer. The real beauty of a 'chaupadi' is revealed only when it is sung. Kavisurya was a great musician-poet. Therefore he could combine his literary genius and power of music in his 'chaupadis', maintaining the right 'raga' and 'tala'.

'Chaupadis' are also full of 'srungara-rasa' (related to love-

act) and to that extent Kavisurya's achievement may be appreciated by keeping Jayadeva and Upendra at the background. Here was a tradition of love and 'srungara' which originated from the union of three powerful forces—sex, love and beauty. Kavisurya, in his 'chaupadis' accepted these three principles (*tatwas*) to describe the worldly lover's conquests in light and shade, as well as the lover's dreams and desires of life that may seem bitter or sweet or beautiful. Almost all of them read like the story of love between Radha and Krishna. He has referred to Braja, Bansi, Yamuna along with the names of Radha and Krishna to justify the 'Vaishnava' nature of the poems. But in their mood, language, Raga and expression, there is no justification of divine *aprakruta* (non-mundane) love. They reveal the games of love played in the lives of common lovers in everyday life, and he has made use of such ideas and language that characterise such lovers. However, to add to the tinge of Vaishnavic concept of *aprakruta* love, he has added the names of Radha and Krishna. Kavisurya knew that the Oriya readers as well the listeners would not be willing to accept the loves of common men and women as the sources of life in literature. There was a duality in their thoughts of *Kama* (sex) in love. They loved it and at the same time denounced it. They were even ashamed and felt embarrassed to express their love. Therefore the poet had to bring in the images of Radha and Krishna or Sita and Rama in acts of love and all that acted as a cloak. The fire of sensuous, physical desires raised by 'Kama' in the worldly lovers were subdued by the soft spiritual conception of love connected with Krishna or Rama. Love seemed to be humble and modest. In the chaupadis, srungara-consciousness thus becomes the primary inspiration. The so called divine exercise becomes secondary. Hence in this case Kavisurya is not a devotee, but a sensuous soul, a 'srungari'. It is to be remembered here that Kavisurya brought in harmony between these two contradictory ideas. He was both a sensuous worldly soul, and a pious devotee. Therefore, sometimes he bubbles with joyous divine delight of a devotee, and at other times he looks mundane, being consumed by the fire of body and sex. But his spiritual exercise-and feelings appear to be quite limited in his expanded poetic universe particulary in comparison to his 'srungara'—preoccupations. He has tried to value the fortunes of a man on the basis

of his power or capacity to win over a beautiful women, and in the enjoyment of her company. For Kavisurya, a man on whose lap the 'lotus-eyed bride', with the power to 'destroy the patience of even Lord Shiva', sits is the most fortunate soul. He must be drinking the 'nectar from her lips', calculating her meaningful 'calls of love' etc There are so many images of such 'Kama' (desires) only to prove how 'srungara rasa' has controlled the creative philosophy of Kavisurya. It is difficult to believe that the chaupadis are only holy songs because the names of Radha Krishna have been stamped on their frame.

Nevertheless, there are certain chaupadis in which Kavisurya has beautifully mingled the spirit of devotion bhakti with the spirit of physical love (*kama*). They walk hand in hand in an intimate gesture—"There is none who is more beautiful than Shyama, O, friend. Let others throw blame unto you. It does not matter. If you have seen the face of Shyama. You may not like to see anyone else's face. Since his face is the source of happiness."

Chaupadis beginning with the above quoted lines refer to the game of love in the story of Radha and Krishna. Here love is so deep and intense that one forgets oneself, and thus it becomes the source of eternal joy for the Vaishanavas. In this case love is free from sexual satisfaction, and though the feelings are full of a zest for life, it has a sacred dedication of the self in love. However, in such occasions, religious inspiration is not most important; what is more important is the poetic inspiration. The poet has realised what love is by observing the behaviour of the earthly lovers, and this realisation has modified his attitude and inspiration towards love in his poems. During the phase of bitter suffering in love owing to temporary separation the poet feels as if divinely moved Therefore, the heroine's song of tears after the separation from her lover, has uplifted the chaupadis to an almost divine height. From his poems it may be noted how the poet had spiritual feelings. But at the same time he was a 'srungari poet'. He is like a lover, who is not only deeply immersed in the beauty of love but can also describe it delightedly and declares that supreme success lies in the union of the bodies. Thus the 'chaupadis' apart from being spiritual in tone are basically songs of human life—the songs of love, 'kama', and beauty.

The soul of the 'chaupadis' is the pleasure derived from the union of the bodies (*sambhoga srungara*). The sap that flows arising from meetings, contacts, kisses and embraces of the hero and the heroine, goes to shape the spirit of such 'sambhoga srungara'. It is aroused with the help of six seasons, the moon, sandal paste, voyages on water, journey in the forest, and the game of sex, etc. The poet has described such situations vividly with almost artistic perfection. In fact different situations in which the lovers convey their love have been beautifully portrayed by Kavisurya in his chaupadis. These situations may be divided mainly into four categories—(i) the experience of love at first sight, (ii) desire for union, (iii) experiences after the physical union, and (iv) feelings of sorrow due to separation and reconciliation. But the central focus in Kavisurya's poems lies on the spontaneous expressions of love. These in fact begin from the first meeting of the hero and heroine, who slowly grow to appreciate each other's physical beauty and no doubt move along through intimate sexual-desires for each other. But finally it is not pleasure of sex, but pleasure of love which brings in the spirit of union and intense happiness.

In more than fifty of these poems the poet has described this mysterious way of love in a colourful manner. In the songs of love between Radha and Krishna, there is jealousy, consolation and prayer. Radha suffers from jealousy when Krishna returns from the house of Chandravali. She takes it as an unfaithful act of Krishna towards her. She sits silently, crying over the memory of Krishna. But Kavisurya is not much interested in describing such jealousy in Radha, and his lines are restrained. On the other hand he is interested to picture what he calls the *duryaya mana* (love-anger) in her.

As has been pointed out earlier, in Kavisurya's poems poetic emotions have been formulated as musical units. They may not be strictly lyrics, because the age was not exactly ripe for such poems. Yet in poems like, "You are my heart's garland of gems", "O lotus-eyed, forget your sorrow", "Oh friend of my soul, sometimes my words you can't deny" and "Excuse me O dear, dear image of Rati, excuse. . .", etc., the poet has expressed his deep sense of happiness more or less in powerful lyrics, and to that extent these poems may be taken as helping to raise strong personal emotions and feelings. In fact in songs

of love concerning Radha and Krishna, Kavisurya has really expressed his own anxious hopes for love and his own desires and delights as well as his own sorrows and happiness, and to that extent these poems are lyrics, even in the modern sense of the term.

Kishorechandranandachaupadichautisa

Kishorechandranandachaupadichautisa is probably the best among Kavisurya's poems. As it is connected with the poet's Sanskrit work *Kishore Chandrananda Champu*, it is called as 'Champu'. The Sanskrit version is a limited work on the love of Radha and Krishna. In the history of Sanskrit literature, it does not enjoy a significant place. On the other hand, *Kishore Chandrananda Chaupadi Chautisa* is unique as a literary piece. The love concerning Radha and Krishna is expressed in beautiful images and through delicate moods.

Chaupadi Chautisa is a harmonious combination of two literary trends in Oriya literature. A 'chautisa' is a poem of thirty-four stanzas at par with 34 letters of the Oriya alphabet, where each letter begins a stanza, and the whole poem is composed in that order. Later, this alphabetic principle was adopted to write chaupadis, which came to be called as 'chaupadi-bhusana'. Instead of thirty-four stanzas, there used to be thirty-four chaupadis in such structure. Poets like Dinabandhu Harichandan, Dhananjay Bhanja and Upendra Bhanja each composed a 'chaupadi-bhusana'. Following this tradition, Kavisurya also wrote three 'chaupadi-bhusanas'. He used the thirty-four letters of the Oriya alphabet one after the other, in the beginning of each stanza. Even though the 'chaupadi-bhusana' is an expanded form of 'chautisa'. there is no serial reproduction of the sequences of the narrative. Each chaupadi is independent and self-complete. Upendra Bhanja made use of this technique in his 'Chhandas' called 'chhanda-bhusana' or 'chhanda-chautisa'. In place of thirty-four chaupadis, there are thirty-four chhandas in this form. The significance of such 'chhanda-chautisa' is that the chhandas constitute a single whole so far as the poetic feeling is concerned and they project a single theme. Thus 'chhanda-chautisa' is usually developed into a kavya depicting the life of Krishna. Perhaps, Kavisurya was inspired by Bhanja's endea-

vour. The result was *Kishore Chandrananda Chaupadi Chautisa.* There are thirty-four 'chaupadis' and each 'chaupadi' begins with one of the thirty-four consonants arranged serially. The love episodes of Radha and Krishna are incorporated into it. It is an independent creative work of Kavisurya. In Sanskrit there are two versions of 'champu', both in prose and poetry. But it does not influence Oriya stanzaic patterns. Only in both one can trace the parallel stories related to the loveliness of Radha and Krishna.

Kishore Chandrananda Chaupadi Chautisa is a complete kavya. The poet has enriched the work with the 'srungara-rasa' arising out of the game of love between Radha and Krishna in an efficient and sweet manner, while maintaining the *Raga* and *Tala*, language and rhyme, together in a dramatic style. Though the poet has used common and known ideas and themes, the artistic structure of the poem shows that it is not a common ordinary creation. The poet has used love as a cover to justify his fine sense of what is beautiful. The last word for him is the love episode related to Radha and Krishna and here one can enjoy the beauty of the flower of Radha-Krishna's love-consciousness in full bloom.

The poem's style combines the narrative kavya with the lyric-'chaupadi' as also the sublime Krishna kavya with the popular dramas of Krishna lila. That is, the poem has both lyrical force and dramatic power. The story is built upon questions and answers exchanged between Radha, Krishna, Lalita and other lady-friends. The narrative part is full of dialogues. It shows how a young woman, lost in her visions of the beautiful becomes restless for union. To create dramatic 'rasa', in an arrangement of dramatic sequences was not unknown to Kavisurya. Yet he did not depend on the external events. The real organization in the poem grew from inside—in the arrangement and proper evolution of feelings and emotions of the hero and heroine, and this supported by the external dramatic elements provided real power to the poem.

The kavya begins with the soft delicacy of a woman's heart, her chequered emotions, and a note of sorrow due to separation. Sriradha has thought sweetly of Krishna and has heard his flute. The river Yamuna of her body and youth is almost overflowing, but this flood from within cannot spill over the banks.

So she wants to express her desires before Lalita, her lady-friend. But where is that language in which the poet can express the youthful, unfulfilled pleasure, surprise and curiosity of Sri-Radha ? Such feelings can never be expressed in words, particularly for the person who is completely lost in herself—"What happened ? it can't be said O, friend " It is not possible to keep a secret after that. Radha has exposed herself before Lalita. Lalita is a unique creation of Kavisurya, combining in her the lady-go-between of kavyas and the lady-friend of the Vaishnavite literature. Now, she gets an opportunity to play with Radha and Krishna. She scolds Radha for her carelessness. She laughs at her sorrow and lack of foresight. This way she increases the desires in Radha to be united with Krishna, and then goes to meet him. She does not let Krishna know the mind of Radha immediately and purposely makes him restless. Krishna requests her to tell him about Radha and says that without her he would lose his life. Lalita pretends, consoles Krishna and raises doubts in him that Radha does not tolerate the love of any other man beyond her husband. She returns and tells Radha that Krishna has refused her love. It shocks and surprises Radha and she cannot decide whether to live or not. The conflict becomes intense in her. She thirsts to meet Krishna. There is no end to her innocent prayer and acute restlessness. In fact Lalita tries to test her strength in love by telling lies. But Radha could prove her love, and Lalita is happy. She bites like a snake and takes away the poison like a snake-charmer. She leads Radha to drink the nectar from the flute of Krishna and finally unites her with him. From the approach to the grove where the lovers unite Lalita bids then farewell. The so-called elements of humour and jokes in the love of Radha and Krishna are over. The poet as if builds the facade of love and breaks it at the same time. The process continues throughout the poem. This spirit of an accomplished artist, who loves to break in order to create, is expressed in the character of Lalita, which to a large extent in a unique creation in ancient Oriya poetry.

Kavisurya has narrated the love-story of Radha and Krishna in his dramatic lyrics in a juicy style. He has added to the story a fine sense of beauty as well as an element of humanistic appeal. He has created an atmosphere of intense youth-

ful delight through humour and jokes between Radha and Lalita. The dramatic movements are full of witty outbursts and powerful arguments. His choice of words is also interesting. He joined Sanskrit words with colloquial Oriya words and even with Yavanic words and liberated his poems from the conventional attitudes of Riti-poets. In fact with him chautisa becomes a typical example of the union between the style of kavya with colloquialism. Though he could not fully escape from the rigid principles of Riti-kavya, particularly as related to similies, he added new meanings to them, by calling upon one sensuous experience to replace another. "O dear, with golden skin; who has not tasted the sweet look in your eyes" and "O beautiful, let not eyes of Shyama kiss you" are lines in which the 'eye' tastes and kisses. The poet has translated the power of sight into the sensation of tongue and the experience of touch. Thus chaupadi-chautisa is almost like a poetic confluence of poetry, music and dramas. It brought a new experience and taste in the state and stock sensibility and poetry of the Riti-age.

Bhaktigitika

In his *Bhaktigitika*, Kavisurva has sung of the glories of god and about his beautiful creation. Hence these are in the nature of hymns and prayers. The themes relate to the poets own feelings about poverty, frustration, anxiety as well as thirst for freedom in life. So far form is concerned, there are chautisas (*Mahavahu Janana*), chhandas (*Sarpa Janana, Jagannath Janana*) and chaupadis. He has also written chaupadis in Sanskrit. The poems are dominated by a strong spiritual feeling where God is the poet's ultimate Saviour and can save him from all sense of fear. The main desire is how can one be saved from the punishment of Yama after death. The poems are essentially simple, and true to the poet's beliefs and convictions. Kavisurya ofcourse is not alone in writing such poems. In fact through these poems he comes to contribute to a strong tradition of 'Bhakti' poetry in Oriya that has exponents like Salbeg (17th century) and Banamali (18th century). Kavisurya is a great artist who fuses his spiritual feelings with brilliant 'alankara', and bhakti is controlled by his own witty expressions that have often used alliteration, metaphors, conceits, anti-climax, etc.

Thus *Jagannath Janana* begins by putting blame on lord Jagannath "What does one offer you, that I have not offered. How does one act for you that I have not; That I suffer here so much." He points out that though God's flag of equality is unfurled, and he is generous to every one, He is not so to the poet. He attacks this sense of partiality in God and asks Him —"Whose empty pitcher you have not filled in, with your wanton kindness?" The mother-deer in the forest-fire, the elephant while caught by the crocodile, Draupadi while being undressed by Durshasana—in fact, every body. God even has helped the Brahmin Ajamila and Sudama Though they have not given anything to God yet they have received His blessings at the time of need. The poet is laughing at God. Ajamila just called his son 'Narayana', Sudama only offered a grain of rice. And that became sufficient for Him to maintain that they were great devotees and He saved them. These so-called mysterious ways of the God are no longer mysterious to the poet. He has now understood his flaw. May be in his ignorance, Ajamila at least once has uttered the name of God. Sometimes people take medicine without knowing the disease and are cured. The name 'Narayana' is thus the cure for all human suffering. When a worldly soul repents, he utters the name of the Lord, grows into devotion and is ultimately saved from future suffering through this mood of repentance. Once a man begins meditating on the beautiful 'lotus-feet' of God, he grows obedient, and his mind becomes calm and composed. Kavisurya comes to realise that all human beings do not enjoy the right to enjoy favour from God until and unless one comes completely under His control. A complete dedication of body and soul is necessary to feel god in man. He is to take shelter under the 'lotus-feet'. Then only God comes to save His friend's soul. It is not the body which pulls man to God, but the mind—"When the breeze starts blowing what is the necessary of a fan?" Ego, pride and unmindfulness are the diseases that keep men away from God. The poet tries to avoid them and wishes that to his last breath he should continue taking shelter under God. He sings—"O great Lord, everything spurs out of your desire. You may decide to save me, help me. It does not matter/I have no other way but to follow your flag that saves the distressed souls of the world". Since to take shelter under the blessings of God saves

man from his sufferings, one has to carefully frame his work or 'karma'. Only in complete dedication of one's own soul he can come to God. It is known as *prapatti*. It brings in completeness o` devotion, happiness of soul, and end to all miseries. The 'janana' begins with an anti-climax, and ends in self-surrender. Another poem, entitled *Sarpa Janana* is also written in this style, that is, with a questioning mind. The devotee has decided to satiate his thirst of unfulfilment by scolding his dear God. God is no more the vast 'Ocean of kindness' but a wild 'poisonous vipe '. Therefore God in his new poetic shape of a 'snake' is a vicioı s venomous circle, a lover of holes, a listener in eyes, a soul of pleasure. However, these words carry double meaning. When Kavisurya calls Him a *Kala Sarpa* (monstrous snake) God is incarnated as Lord Jagannath. The poet has addressed Him as *Kıunanidhi* (the fount of kindness). Thus the rebuke of the poet is just a pretension. No devotee can rebuke God. In the shape of *Kala Sarpa*, Kavisurya has the vision of eternal time (*mahakala*). It is an expression of his intimacy with God which is remarkably reflected in his language and style. He has known Lord Jagannatha to be that wanton lover, who played with the Gopis in 'Brajabhumi'. It is a secret which he knows like any faithful servant knowing the secrets of his master. But the master cannot go against his servant since all his secrets will be exposed. Thus, in a way, the servant controls the master--"O Lord, whatever has happened, has happened/ Now do not lose your honour/I only know your secrets/Let not others know it. "But the servant will never sing against his Master. The scandal that the Lord is a 'Kala-sarpa' will not spread. It is only a threatening.

In fact the poem ends with complete surrender. The wish of the Master is the final wish of the servant. The powerful language and appropriate use of 'alankara' have dignified the prayer. In realising the divine, there is no necessity of using ornamental style, but Kavisurya has done it because he cannot check his urge to use poetic ornaments. *Sarpa Janana* is a simple lyric. In comparison the *Kshya*—lyric of Kishore Chandrananda Chaupadichautisa and *Mahabahu Janana* are more difficult poem. Apart from these poems, in other 'chaupadis' too, the poet has expressed his spiritual feelings, and everywhere he has prayed to God to free him from worldly bondage. He

has also written a hymn in praise of Devi (Goddess Mangala).

Humour and Satire

In the medieval Oriya literature there have not been many humorous and satirical writings. The poet Brajanath Badajena (1730-1795), wrote his well-known work *Chatura Binoda* in prose with a great flourish of wit and originality. Kavisurya's prose work *Hasya Kallola* as well as his mock-poetic-satires have powerful intellectual wits and sharp attitude of criticism. For the first time in Oriya literature Kavisurya created delicately entertaining satirical works, which can be divided into two categories (i) prose and (ii) poetry.

Prose

To win over the heart of his patron king, Kavisurya created streams of humour in his prose work *Hashya Kallol* (waves of Laughter) He almost created a state of absurdity through the situations in the story and more so through the style of expression. The name of the kingdom in the story is 'Rahashyaghosa' (the village of the cowherds). The king is known as 'Gadhapati' (the lord of the asses) to contrast with the Gajapati' title enjoyed by the kings of Orissa. The king's name is 'Vallatakarna', meaning that the ears of the king are like sickles and he is a little deaf, because no king of his age had time to listen to the complaints of the people. His dewan is 'Behia' (shameless) Mohapatra, his priest is 'Akalyana' without blessing, and the court-poet is 'Kapiraj (king of monkeys). May be from Sanskrit 'Prahasana' or 'Hasyarnav' (parody), Kavisurya borrowed these names. They show his ample disgust and hatred towards the courtly characters. The priest blesses that the king may ride an ass and be the food for vultures and wolves after death and let his wife be characterless. The doctor prescribes poison to cure the king. The soldiers of the king shout bravely when they see a knife, but slip away quietly when they see a sword. The poet not only laughed at the contemporary administration but also attacked the contemporary social conditions. The illiterate Bahinipati Purana Panda reads out the notes of Corruption from *Koutakarnaba* (The Ocean of Fun) in which Cor-

ruption asks Kali—"How do people save themselves from this world?" Kali answers—"Laxmi (Goddess of plenty) and Fame are honoured by Sin: honest people are destroyed if they come in contact with the pundits," etc. The work was meant to entertain the king, but the poet also wanted to make his patron king conscious of the prevailing picture of corruption, evil and tyranny.

The prose of *Hashya Kallol* is sometimes pure poetry. The sentences are rhymed properly. Sometimes there are alliterations. The language is not literary, but the humour sifting through absurdity has expressions like, 'the grand riverbank at the top of the hill', 'daughter of a bramhachari', etc. Along with colloquial Oriya the poet has made frequent use of Parse and courtly language of the time.

Poetry

'People of this world will only laugh at you' (*Jagate Kevala*) 'It is only sweetly said, O dear' (*Kuha jauthae sina*), 'Whom to say' (*Kahaku kahiba*)—are the three very popular and witty poems. The poet has criticised the man's foolishness and bad nature. The pungent humour is neither accommodating nor sympathetic. He has mocked at vanity, falsehood, indiscipline and evil etc. He believes that whatever is written on the brow of one's destiny will happen, and with this faith he composed *Jagate Kevala* to justify the position of man in the universe. Therefore, whenever any man tries to go beyond his limits set for him by destiny he only insults himself and the poet mocks at him. Thus the poet does not tolerate the idea of a dog who tries to become a lion only by raising the hairs of its body. He has realised the vanity in man to bridge desires with fulfilment. Such an attempt turns into a laughing stock. In *Jagate Kevala* the crow, bitch, goat, ass, glow-worms want to become what they are not, revolting against their nature. But however it may try a crow will not be a cuckoo, a bitch cannot be a village-cow, and the glow-worm cannot be the sun. The poem is symbolic. It speaks of man's foolish wanton action, false pride, ego, meaningless strength, unpardonable greed, and pitiful nature of judgement. The attitude is moralistic but permeated with a strong commonsense.

Sarase Kuha Jauthae (It is only sweetly said) comes next. The poem depicts rejected dreams and bitter wishes of a man who has to live on this earth. While in search of a parrot, he gets a crow—whatever he dreams to get, he never gets. Fate all the time teases him and he suffers. It is a painful experience to live. Therefore the poet says, addressing a pundit—Can you change a piece of iron into gold if you melt it and weld it again?" The poet speaks ironically of the young kings and princes—"When a young prince crowns himself with a turban of sarees, he thinks himself as if a great emperor." Though once Kavisurya used to praise these young feudal lords he now says—"Even though a *desikusuma* (a flower without fragrance) is praised, it will never spread its fragrance." The poet is sad because he has unnecessarily poured praises at the head of inefficient people—"Even though you keep a cat in a den, it will never have the strength of a lion."—Similarily in the poem *Kahaku Kahiba* (whom to say) the poet has pointed his fingers at the evils and corruption in men, which are not due to their own folly or carelessness but because of man's own tragic destiny. Fate, as if, enjoys human suffering. Man wears such clothes that his under garments can be seen and such fashion arouses keen laughter. It is definitely a matter of joke. But when the waist-thread seems like a 'snake', the knot of hair at the back of a woman's head turns into a 'thunder', the household God will think bad of the householder and the whole thing will turn into a curse. Man is such a helpless creature that he cannot protest against the cruel laughters of his destiny and God. He is only to knit his brow and patiently bear the suffering. On the other hand the poet's eyes get flooded with tears looking at this tragic state of man. Therefore though on the surface there is fun in the poem, deep down the feelings are different, almost tragic.

The matured realisation of the poet in these three poems has almost become a part of the native Oriya experience. When the poet says, "Look all have now become poets and the glow-worms behave like the sun.", it not only gives an indication of the prevailing literary chaos and pretensions of the people, but at the same time touches a responsive chord in the hearts of the people.

Other Writings

Kavisurya has also written many other 'chhandas' and 'chautisas.' It will be a long list. He has composed three 'dhumpa' lyrics—'little-dhumpa', 'Jaifula-dhumpa' and 'Niali-dhumpa'. It is said that he invented this form of 'dhumpas'. When it rains heavily, kings enjoy listening to these 'dhumpas that is, songs were sung with a musical instrument called 'dhumpa', from which the name has been borrowed. The poet also wrote a few chaupadis in Hindi and Telugu. They are not so well-known but they prove the poet's knowledge in other regional languages.

CHAPTER 4

A Forward-looking Talent

Kavisurya had great capacity to express vividly the sensuous, aesthetic and spiritual feelings in him. He was an expert imagist, skilled in using similes and metaphors along with subtle satirical notes. His love for the art of glib was well-known and the way he combined both humour and satire can be eloquently seen in many of his poems as well as in *Hashya Kallol*, which made his patron-king careful and conscious of the changing situations in the state. Kavisurya was an able administrator and legislator. Besides he was a great believer in God. He was the poet both of the court and of the common man. In the literary circles he was both an ardent follower of tradition and a great experimentalist. He was not the setting sun of the medieval times but the promising purple dawn of the modern. The great Oriya Riti-poet Upendra Bhanja was tradition-bound, but Kavisurya was a modern. Upendra had strengthened even the bad qualities of the Riti-age but Kavisurya rejected them silently as far as possible. He had almost thrown light on that dark road, which was subsquently to be treaded by Radhanath Ray (1848-1908) to build the modern age in Oriya poetry. In fact a new modern consciousness was in the making before the birth of Radhanath, and Kavisurya in the beginning of the century was an early initiator.

His Kavya *Chandrakala* was an early example where the poet tried to break new ground. In this incomplete work he followed the rules of Riti-kavya. But after writing eighteen 'chhandas,' he could see the inert artificial style of the Riti-poets and freed himself from their rigours to write natural, humane poetry. Not that he fully succeeded in his attempts. But he experimented with new images, similes, metaphors, etc. which brought back Oriya poetry from Riti-sensibility to a newer

refined sensibility, more appropriate to a changing time. *Chandrakala's* hero and heroine belonged to a princely, conventional sophisticated life. But the poet's later heroines, Radha and Krishna, though they belonged to an aristocratic society, were true lovers, for which their manners reflected the common lovers. The poetic mind of Kavisurya in fact was inclined towards life's reality in which it grew up, and therefore poems even without any reference to Radha-Krishna also depicted true and real love.

Kavisurya always emphasised upon the spontaneity of feelings. Words, only necessary to express oneself, were used. He never liked to weaken his powerful satements by using many ornamental words. His forte was his precision. His Chaupadis were examples of his original style where he often used colloquial words and language. He combined the pure Sanskrit words with native Oriya dialects by rejecting the classical restraint of the Riti-poets. Thus it may be said that he gave a shape to poetic language. His poems revealed his individuality and self consciousness. He identified his feelings with Krishna's. It was not to realise the divine but to express one's own feelings towards love. There was always emphasis on the individual's feelings and ability to experience, irrespective of whether he was Krishna or Radha or Lalita etc. These poems came out as powerful lyrics that influenced the later poets like Radhanath. Kavisurya was thus the messenger of a new sensibility and language in Oriya poetry.

Kavisurya was also a great artist who in a way enriched Odissi music and dance. He imagined the perfect 'Raga' to express the feelings, created language to suit the Raga, and wrote lilting lyrics to raise the power of music, that carries us to the supra-conscious world charged with feelings and emotions. He chose words to create music. He was conscious of the use of metre and therefore he arranged words cautiously, so that while even reciting his poems, a reader can extract the sap of life and discover the sweet world of music. His moric metre was an example of his experimental attitude. He tried to bring the use of hard and soft syllables into Oriya poetry. Of course, the moric metre introduced by him, is not accepted exactly by the modern Oriya poets. This metre was used by Kavisurya following the ideal of Sanskrit metre, for which the metre

appears as if it is not Oriya, because the Oriyas do not accept आ (a) ई (i) ऊ (u) ऋ (ru) ए (a) and ओ (o) to have long sounds. Kavisurya's moric metre was later accepted by the Oriya poets only after the use of this metre in the poems of Rabindranath Tagore. There is a chaupadi of Kavisurya written in unrhymed metre. But it was not blank verse and the inspiration for that he might have got from Sanskrit.

Along with formulating new poetic language, introducing new poetic consiousness and creating beautiful metre, Kavisurya experimented with many modern techniques in his poems, like using with, paradox, parody and synesthesia and developed a tone combining both satire and humour.

Kavisurya has become immortal in Orissa. There is no Oriya, who has not engrossed himself in the world of his music. His literature was like the national literature for the Oriyas, and it shaped the national culture. The characteristics of his age became lively and eloquent in his poems, reflecting the hopes, dreams and problems of the people. His powerful peoms beginning with lines 'The past is past, O' friend' and 'O Charioteer of the mind, everything is lost' etc. have been echoing in almost every Oriya mind, everywhere. The poet has become a legend, and his poetry has become a national heritage for the Oriyas.

CHAPTER 5

A Bouquet of Lyrics from Kavisurya

Words of Praise

(Radha speaks to her friend)

O friend,
One who hasn't been pierced by that
Sharp arrow of Krishna's look once in life,
Whines out in utter sorrow;
Why should I ?

On the way to the bank of Yamuna
Under the Keli Kadamba.
If one is not fortunate even to wink once
At that image of beauty,
That beauty of a piece of blue cloud,
Then what remains, for whom ?
She should know how to suffer
and feel inferior to a beast
as she hasn't even once listened
and felt delighted at the songs of glory
Of the divine love of Shyama,
enjoying the company of the 'rasikas'.

She, who hasn't once sat near Krishna,
being merged into him,
felt delighted in his zestful talk
to win over her mind,
sealing her lips with kisses holding her in a
deep embrace, . . .
May remember what she has lost;
If, she hasn't bathed in the

sweet sap of love of Rasa Binoda
who steals away clothes on the bathing ghat,
Hasn't listened to the scarce
melodious note of his flute from a distance,
She should know what she doesn't have;

O' let me swear,
One who hasn't even once in life
been wounded by the sword of Kandarpa,
Only suffers, and dies,

*

The Lover to the Beloved

O dear, thou art my heart's garland of gems
My treasure of love;
Whenever the snake-like Kandarpa bites.
You are my cure to consume the poison,
To explore 'Indrapada'
you are my ladder.

Like precious ornaments
Your feet crown the head of the 'rasikas',
Vanquish the pride in red corals
and new purple leaflets,
How fortunate I, being your slave,
to stripe them in red 'alata',
O my source of bliss, you take away my sorrows,
Your lady friend might have censured me
Did you take her to be true and felt sad ?
O dear, intelligent love,
Please shed your sadness.

In your anger I know,
you will not decorate my breast,
But how can you escape from my heart ?
On the horizon of my mind's sky
Forever you are that constant
bright twinkling star;
No man can forget unto death
That each new moment of union

adds to the treasure of love,
So to satiate the eternal thirst
The new poet waits like a *chataka*
for your first fresh shower of *rasa*.

*

Radha to Her Lady-Friend

O my friend, what is it ?
I rot here out of shame,
What did Krishna find in me
to drown himself in the flood of my love.

I am a village bumpkin
I know not how to walk with grace
to parade the pride of youth
rousing the feelings of *kama*;
But Krishna loves to call me a swan
in her play in water;
In Brajapura aren't there beautiful women
to compete with the heavenly beauty of Ramva,
But pity ! Krishna's restless moving eyes
do not even once wink at them;

Quivering my eye-brows I know not
How lo express my love from the corner of my eyes
attracting lovers,
But lo he adores my eyes
Like the dancing moving eyes of a black-doe.

Krishna's words of praise multiply
to sing the glory of my beauty
without showing any disgust,
Even on the day I go to play with him
With my bare neck sans the glittering ornaments
Without my fashionable gorgeous dresses.

O dear, my friends fail to understand
Whether it is love or anger,
But my poet-friend is the only witness.

Shed Your Anger (Abhiman)

Excuse me O lady of love, I came,
and suddenly saw you taking your bath—
the image of Rati, par excellence.

O beautiful one, why do you have such *abhiman*
How could I have ever dared to get in
If your sentry or maid-servant
would have rushed at me telling
that you were bathing.

Your maids surrounded you,
They obstructed my vision,
I couldn't see you in the pond,
O how beautiful were your heavy hips
And the breasts and thighs,
I saw them at a glance.

Like lightening you vanished quickly
Biting the corner of your saree,
Behind the curtain
Ringing your tinkling anklets,
I repeat O dear, and swear,
If such audacity is repeated
Then torture me by hiding,
But at least for today, allow me
Your deep warm embrace.

Listening to these humble words of Krishna
A delighted Radha lost herself
In the soothing game of love.

*

The Lover to the Cloud

O Cloud, you are dying out of pride
Roaring so loudly,
What futile roars !
Without even having a tinge of charm
of my beloved's unparalleled beauty.

What vanity !
You compete with necklace glittering with pearls
on her warm bosom,
Behold her a while
Before sending your garland like showers
On the mountain tops;
In this creation, there is no match to my fair-lady
When her playful eye-brows dance—
How dare you pride in a piece of rainbow ?

Look awhile at my beloved
Dressed in her blue saree,
She swells with pride
To play games of love and praise
With the dazzle of your lightening.
With what hopes you are sending
The shower of snow-white hail-stones,
They are no match to her jasmine-white teeth
Revealed by the gentle showers of smiles on her lips.
How do you flatter yourself, O cloud !
Haven't you seen the smooth soft hair
On my beloved's head,
like the deep dark emerald-blue tail of the *Chamar ?*
Why do you foster such a false notion
That your showers are only cool and soothing ?
Haven't you seen the ever gentle
soothing ways of my beloved ?
O Cloud, you are no match to her.

*

Why, Spoil Yourself. . .

O dear friend, with playful eyes of a wagtail,
You have spoilt yourself in strange temerity !
Being a dwarf you wished to pluck flowers
from the Kalpa-tree in heaven,
Knowingly you sowed the seeds of sorrow
In the corn-fields of your heart.
O dear, snake-charmers even fear
To play with the Kala Naga,
Without knowing the art of a charmer;

In what whim and wanton spirit
You roused the snake ?
Your body is so soft
That it withers away at the very thought of
the bitter rays of the sun.
Still you wish to reach his hot sphere;
With what strange desire you wanted to
lie down unconscious
On the edge of a sharp sword
Dreaming it to be a bed ?
How could you believe a naughty-thief
Without a word of protest
And offered your entire treasure ?
O dear, how have you spoilt yourself !

Lines from 'Jagannath Janana'

Oh, Lord of the Universe,
The vast ocean of kindness,
The soul of all living creatures !
Unfurling your flag of equality
Why are you so partial towards me,
And I suffer here alone
Why O Lord—what others did offer you
That I didn't ? What others did for you
That I didn't ?

The young deer was saved from
the hunter's cruel trap of fire,
And she had just thought of your
lotus-feet did nothing more;
When the elephant-king
was to be devoured by the crocodile
He only remembered you,
And people believe, you came to
his immediate rescue;
I haven't heard anything more,
But Draupadi, meditating,
standing helpless undressed, before
The royal assembly, and you showered

Your blessings--you are
Always kind to others, O Lord,
I know not, with how much of gold
the five Pandavas had bribed you ?

* * *

The great pious brahmin Sudama had
just offered a palm of rice,
But what fruit did he enjoy ?
Tell me O lord, whose empty pitcher of desires
yov haven't filled in with your wanton kindness ?
What others did for you that I didn't ?

*

Lines from 'Jagate Kevala'

Why ever be a butt of ridicule
People will only laugh at you.
How can a dog, raising its fur on shoulder,
Roaring from the hilly den,
Furiously moving its eye-balls,
Become a lion ?
How can a crow painting its eyes in red
Roosting on the dense mango groves
And feasting to the heart's content,
Sing like a cuckoo ?
How does a crane painting its beaks in red
Holding a stalk of lotus
Wish to walk in grace like a swan ?
The sentry riding a painted donkey
Whipping it to submission
And feeding it with delicious spices,
Fails to make it a horse;
Everyone is an image of his own fate,
Whatever is destined, is destined;
No science of alchemy can
Transform a piece of brass into gold;
A piece of charcoal dipped in the Ganga
Cannot be an emerald
To grace the neck of a fair-lady;
So why be a butt of ridicule
When people will only laugh at you

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Kavisurya Bala[illegible], Rath, a nineteenth century poet-administrator of Orissa, is an immortal name in Oriya litera-ture. By [illegible]using a new sensibility into Oriya literature and experimenting on new forms he tried to free Oriya poetry from the classical chains by his new style and technique.

His poems, a blend of literature and music, comprise different [illegible] of poetry like Champu, Chautisa, Chaupadi, narrative poetry, etc. and also new forms like parody and paradox. He gave a new shape to poetic language by combining [illegible] Sanskrit words with [illegible] Oriya dialects.

His satirical prose work [illegible] *Kallol*, considered one of the earliest works in Oriya [illegible], reveals his intellectual wit and critical [illegible]. The poet not only laughed at the contemporary [illegible] but also [illegible] attacked the social [illegible].

Dasarathi [illegible], the author of this monograph, is currently a Reader in Oriya at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Re[illegible] of the prestigious Oriya Akademi Award of 1973 for his *Kavya Sambad*, Dr. Das has a number of books to his credit. In this monograph he introduces Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, poet-administrator of Orissa, to non-Oriya readers.

SAHITYA AKADEMI
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